

**TO: Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot**

**FROM: Amina Dickerson, Arts and Culture Transition Committee**

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**OBJECTIVE: Ensure All Chicagoans participate in and enjoy the arts, regardless of their zip code or economic status.**

**A potential initiative (one sentence)**

***Update and implement the key ideas that communities throughout the city recommended for inclusion in the Chicago Cultural Plan of 2014.***

**How the new administration can infuse the values of equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation in this initiative**

Fulfilling the basic priorities of the existing, dormant plan can jumpstart the work in the cultural sector while also elevating the core values of that plan, which emphasized diversity, access and equity. Among the chief priorities stated in 2014: to ensure quality arts education and lifelong learning for all Chicago's children; to elevate and expand neighborhood cultural assets; to engage communities in their own cultural planning; and to integrate culture into daily life. These seem to directly align with Mayor-elect Lightfoot's objective to "ensure all Chicagoans can participate in and enjoy the arts, regardless of their zip code or economic status. "

Thousands of truly diverse voices from throughout the city's neighborhoods invested in creating the plan, but regrettably, too many, (most?) aspects of the plan were never realized. Updating and implementing strong programs that fulfill the ambitions of the earlier plan would honor the hope, promise and possibility that parents, young people, educators, local residents, tourists and most significantly, artists, invested in creating the plan. It seems disingenuous to return to the public to seek ideas when so much of their creative thinking has already been provided to the city's effort to fashion a worthy, but unrealized plan. Such an approach is also much more cost-effective, allows for a jump-start on initiating cultural projects and arts programming and encourages people to feel that, while delayed, the time, money and intellectual horsepower they contributed was not wasted. They proposed more than 200 initiatives and signaled their hope that necessary funding and policies would be enacted that would truly strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector (priority #4) and integrate culture into daily life (priority #10). Chicago's cultural sector contributes more than \$4.03 billion (Arts Alliance Illinois, 2015) and helped bring more than 55 million visitors to the city in 2017. Focused investment and action on many of the plan's ideas can push these numbers, and the related economic impact, much higher and more equitably distributed.

Recognizing that the plan itself may require updating, a strategy to return to communities to invite their assessment of what has or has not occurred, what new dimensions or approaches to the priorities need to be considered, and what new ideas or priorities need to be added is a way of building a partnership and connection to communities early on. Most of the economic benefit of the arts occurs primarily in the central Loop and North side regions of the city, with much more limited economic impact in the outlying neighborhoods. Revisiting the plan with a focus on investment, collaboration, training and capacity building for arts organizations operating in the under-invested communities on the South and West sides of the city could spread the economic benefits and spur new kinds of creative vitality and development in these regions.

Communities can play multiple roles—consumers, co-creators, patrons, partners and investors. Their active engagement in revisiting and revitalizing the plan also helps foster accountability and transparency; ultimately, the success of the programs is demonstrated through the transformation it provides for neighborhoods and their residents. Implementing the plan is a means to building stronger and more transparent ties among local institutions of all sizes and can make possible a broader, more consistent and diverse array of opportunities for residents and tourists to engage with, learn through, and celebrate the arts and the artists of Chicago.

### **What is happening today that we need to keep?**

Start with keeping the 2014 Plan, but commit to do a refresh. Partner with an array of local organizations that are doing research on arts education (Ingenuity), the arts economy (Arts Alliance Illinois), or organizations that support and advocate on behalf of various arts disciplines (See Chicago Dance, League of Chicago Theaters, Music Alliance, etc.), to get a sense of what will be needed to achieve a dynamic and engaging “update.”

### **What we need to implement in the next 100 days**

Assess the degree to which the recommendations of the existing plan were implemented. Conduct, with residents and community leaders, audits and asset mapping of community resources, space and facilities, investment dollars, funding levels, the operating environment, partnerships among city agencies (CPL, Parks, CPS, etc.), in order to update what we know/learn about existing levels of collaboration, audiences or constituencies being served, etc. Previous studies and research have identified the dearth of organizations and facilities on the south/west sides of the city and the limited dollars they receive in private philanthropy and other city/state sources, so this would be a place to focus immediate research efforts, especially to understand their capacity building needs.

### **What we can plan for longer-term implementation**

Review and restructure the grants program, with a particular goal of reducing the barriers to application, more direct grants for operating support as well as to prioritize collaborative practice, and to place an emphasis on establishing equity in distribution of resources, so that long ignored communities and underfunded disciplines and organizations receive investment to help stabilize operations and build organizational viability.

Another consideration would be targeted funding to assist fragile, but important, community based arts organizations. Many are at risk in the current economy and are on the brink of closure. A richly diverse arts sector fosters a dynamic arts eco-system in the city; with time and sustained support, these groups can serve as anchors in their communities. Also, consider the feasibility of establishing a few, but strategically-placed regional cultural centers that can not only offer performing and exhibition space, but co-working space shared by dance, music, media and theater organizations, with shared back office support, promotion and marketing and an ongoing roster of classes for youth, seniors and others to ensure access to the arts in local communities and neighborhoods.

Finally, consider the development of new initiatives supporting instruction in arts production (lighting, technical production, set and costume design, exhibit installation, etc.) in addition to instruction in the arts could offer a pipeline for workforce development, broadening awareness of the range of potential careers in the arts industry.

### **What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative**

Silos—starting with City departments that can/should work more closely (Schools, libraries and parks). Resistance to new funding formulas that intentionally advantage those historically receiving less funding, or challenge standard old-school definitions of “art” and “quality-arts”. Perhaps most challenging is making the argument to provide more adequate funding overall for DCASE so that organizations are not left to fight for small dollars, but can seek meaningful support to truly move their work and institutions forward. Among the top 3 priorities from 2014: ***Promote culture as a fundamental driver of prosperity.***

TO: Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

FROM: Committee Member [please post but w/out my name]

RE: Arts and Culture Transition Team Memo - (leveraging resources and policy)

INITIATIVE - Create a permanent position within the Mayor's Office – Deputy Commissioner of Policy Innovation or Ombudsperson - that oversees the creative facilitation and integration of policy related cultural production with deep structural implications and legislative impact, particularly as they relate to the City's 3-5 most pressing equity issues; namely:

- Gun violence/police & comm. relations; housing; jobs; schools, AfAm population loss

This role/position will seek to infuse the values of equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation across all City Departments via Chicago's present day and historic reputation as a global leader of change through the arts. This role is different from but works in concert with a Commissioner of Cultural Affairs (DCase) in that it is tasked with (and has the authority to monetize and mobilize) identifying and stewarding opportunities to use art to enhance civic imperatives related to general governance. This Chief Policy Innovator would look to integrate existing (and propose/call for) public facing cultural production that crosses departmental boundaries and silos.

The primary goal would be the improvement of community awareness, accountability and civic participation in solving complex systemic problems. This initiative aids in educating and improving communications around civics. How can the Arts help the general public understand and want to engage key components of the Police Consent Decree to ensure its proper oversight? How can the arts help those communities most impacted by lead/particulates in the water become literate policy advisors? How can the city empower those who were victims of the criminalization of marijuana to assist in drafting taxation and regulatory policy that is part of a wealth building strategy for black and brown communities? How can we shift from a narrative of arts as beautification to arts as a vehicle for fostering systemic change?. The arts serve all sorts of roles, but too often those in charge of managing and governing the city see the arts as the cherry on top of dessert. Most City employees and City Departments view the bulk of what they do as meat and potatoes with little understanding of the Arts as a main dish or an essential vitamin/supplement that fortifies the overall meal.

100 DAYS - As it currently stands there are several cultural programs that we need to keep because their success as artist led and artist driven ensures ongoing participation and sustainability. Other programs that have (infra)structural potential as conduits for equitable and inclusive distribution of information, resources and programming across all 50 wards need to be identified. Examples include initiatives like CAPS meetings and even entire departments, like Streets and

Sanitation, as untapped distribution channels because of the way they already (geographically) equitably touch every part of the city. What other city systems that are meant for efficient distribution of services or information or resources could become framework for infusion of creative problem solving via cultural production?

ACTION: Task this same arts/culture transition committee with rapid development of a Cultural Audit that lists and rates instances of formal or informal cultural production related to governance that benefits the city (even if its not spearheaded or financially supported by City Hall). This would include everything from monuments, murals, parades, festivals, women's history month displays in the lobby of City Hall, After School Matters, One Summer Chicago, experiential tourism, lemonade stands, community gardens, etc etc

ACTION: Brief review of the Cultural Plan and the Public Art Plan, both documents were written in the last 8 years and are chock full of unrealized goals identified by neighborhood partners and creative experts. DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL.

Integrate other arts position papers (Joyce, Arts Alliance, NEA, etc) How can the Cultural Audit become an addendum or be integrated into an updated version of the Cultural Audit? How will it change if its lens is less about managing culture as entertainment or revenue via tourism and more about a component of solving gun violence, economic and neighborhood development, etc.

ACTION: Review DCASE's mission statement. How can DCASE pivot or reinvent itself as a global leader for developing "The Creative Citizen"(coined by either HPAC or Mike Nourse of Chicago Art Department)? There is currently an Mayorally appointed Cultural Advisory Council that serves as little more than a resume item for its members. On several occasions, this Council has missed opportunities to take a stance or issue formal positions about pressing social issues for which culture is at the center of what will inevitably be systemic shifts in culture and behavior. Think domestic abuse (R. Kelly), sex trafficking (rash of abduction of women/girls), #metoo, saving historic architecture (Prentice); protecting informal cultural treasures (Pilsen +William Walker Murals erased), legalizing spray paint to professional artists. An agenda on race and gender equitable monuments? Can we deputize this Council to be an allied but independent voice that advocates for guidelines and policies that help make sure Chicago remains at the National forefront for leading change via the arts?

BEYOND 100 DAYS - The aforementioned elements should continue to evolve. Long-term implementation of this initiative would require an understanding of how to permanently fund this position and to allocate financial resources to make it useful. A more extensive creative financing approach is needed which could include reviewing national strategies on how to measure and mobilize the economics of creativity.

Areas for potential extensions or generations of funds-- Revising Developers " % for Art" formula, Aldermanic Menu Money, TIF restructuring, marijuana revenue, Tourism revenue, Bank's Community Reinvestment Act sponsoring initiatives for this office (as opposed to funding the position). We will need some consensus building

within City Hall employees that are tasked with executing this concept. This could be mini-retreats or incentivized professional development lunches.

We also need time to fortify allied partners in CTA's arts programs, Chicago Park District's "TRACE" and other embedded Arts Programs. Parsing out who reports to this position and what qualifications are necessary to assume this role will require some in-depth analysis and brainstorming.

CHALLENGES - Challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative are the deeply entrenched territorial attitudes about whose wheelhouse certain roles and responsibilities fall under within City Hall.

This would be unheralded to include Culture as a key part of the Mayor's cabinet. It has to be properly presented so that its not seen as "fluff". Centering the position around development of Civic agency and accountability and a savviness about policy and governance is critical. Skeptics likely abound, namely aldermanic prerogative with regard to neighborhood and economic development. Additionally, civil servants with longstanding job descriptions and titles who will feel threatened and perhaps disempowered when asked to share their authority in a new way will need an opportunity to become invested in this process and to craft what its benefits should be. They also posses profound institutional knowledge. Not just of the recent cultural history, but perhaps long standing examples and best practices of moments in which elements of "Creative Citizenship" have previously worked but have been forgotten (am thinking of Harold Washington's reign).

## MEMO

TO: Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot  
FROM: Akilah Halley, Executive Director of Marwen  
DATE: April 15, 2019  
RE: Advancing Arts and Culture in Chicago

As a member of the Arts and Culture Transition Committee, I am honored to share my thoughts on how to ensure all Chicagoans can participate in and enjoy the arts, regardless of their zip code or economic status. I believe it is critical that we focus on opportunities for Chicago's young people - specifically adolescents and teens who come from communities that struggle to combat poverty, poor health, struggling schools, violence, and trauma - home to longstanding creative brilliance, but also home to historical marginalization. This is an opportunity to build an equitable ecosystem for communities and schools to have sustainable youth-centered arts programming and viable pathways for them to persist to creative careers, should they choose to do so.

It is important to first define art as the full spectrum of traditional and contemporary forms of drawing to drumming, ceramics to cinematography, theater to typography, painting to product design, fiber to film, and singing to sound theory. Participation should also be defined as active, versus passive, because consistent engagement in the arts is essential for personal, intellectual and creative youth development. At the core is the fundamental belief that the arts should be fully integrated into a young person's preparation for, and transition into, thriving adulthood in which the arts remains present in some form.

To that end, I propose that the new administration explore an initiative to invest in partnerships for community-based and citywide organizations to collaborate on strengthening both neighborhood programs and opportunities for young people to safely traverse the city to actively participate in an array of programs. Chicago is steeped with longstanding and emerging institutions and individuals who nurture the creative development of young people, especially those who have not always been given the resources to thrive. This initiative would also include a continuum that provides young people with access to, and allows them to explore, paid opportunities in creative careers to see the arts as viable professions. For organizations with a pre-existing presence in communities, it allows them to deepen their engagement and connection. For citywide organizations it provides space for them to extend their resources into the communities where their young people and families reside.

The new administration campaigned on the values of equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation. This initiative puts equity at the core because it eliminates financial and geographic barriers that create inequitable access to, and often acceptance of, active participation in the arts. Through frequent data sharing and reporting on both funds disbursed and resources available across the city, there is an embodiment of transparency and accountability. By shining a light on small, medium and large-size organizations across the city as well as the spectrum of artistic forms we model an inclusive practice. All of this could ultimately lead to transformation of biased mindsets,

behaviors, and cultural norms, as well as a artistic revitalization of neighborhoods, and consequently the city.

In the next 100 days, the new administration should visit each community and speak with the leaders and participants of these organizations and agencies to understand the impact young people are experiencing based on their involvement. This human-centered research and relationship building approach is one that will not only restore trust, but become building blocks for a will to collaborate. This firsthand experience could also become part of an arts and creativity mapping of local and citywide opportunities for young people. Engaging young people as early as possible is critical because we often design for them instead of with them. It is important to also understand which entities are currently working together, which should be working together, and how city agencies may help support this work. For example, how might the park districts or public libraries act as a bridge for citywide and community-based groups. Additionally, how might city-owned vacant land or underutilized building become a resource. Similar to meeting with the nonprofits doing the work, it is important for the new administration to meet with the businesses (small and large) who are building Chicago's creative economy to assess their investment in Chicago and its young people.

One of the largest challenges that has historically persisted, and may continue to present obstacles, is establishing sustainable and alternative funding streams. Acknowledging that certain aspects of this work will take more time, the new administration should also focus on the long-term policy work that could mandate an allocation of funds to sustain programming. For example, a deep exploration of tax laws, wage structures, zoning incentives, tourism revenue, partnership incubators, etc may unveil additional funding mechanisms. Also given the rise in creative agencies and corporations operating out of Chicago, in addition to funder collaboratives, there may be opportunities to explore how the businesses and academia may support this initiative especially if it connects them with young people who may interested in working with them in the future.



April 15, 2019

Dear Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot,

I, Billy Ocasio as the CEO of The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture and a member of your Transition Committee, submit to you the following concept.

Taking into consideration your campaigns objectives for Chicago's arts and cultural institutions to (1) Ensure all Chicagoans can participate in and enjoy the arts, regardless of zip code or economic status and (2) Leverage cultural assets to foster economic growth and inclusion, I would like to propose an idea for a city-wide art exhibition titled, ***Chicago's Story is Our Story***.

Although the City of Chicago celebrated the 'Year of Public Art' in 2017, supported by DCASE, we feel the project focused heavily on bringing public art to already booming areas like the Loop, Navy Pier, and Millennium Park and not enough on all the other communities west of the lake. With 77 neighborhoods, Chicago is truly a cultural hub with an eclectic mix of ethnic backgrounds whose people and places have a rich story to tell. ***Chicago's Story is Our Story*** will present art installations in each of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods that are geared toward telling the history of that community. This citywide exhibition will engage the following target audiences:

- (a) Arts and cultural institutions,
- (b) Artists, storytellers, and photographers,
- (c) Students and Senior Citizens,
- (d) Business and chamber of commerce,
- (e) Educational institutions,
- (f) Police departments through their CAPS programs, and
- (e) Entire communities.

The main goal is to display or perform art installations throughout various places within each community to provide arts access to every Chicagoan despite political, social, or economic background and to foster economic growth through arts and culture.

To exemplify, in Humboldt Park, multiple pieces of art can be displayed along the Paseo Boricua strip on Division Street, the heart of Chicago's Puerto Rican community. The art organization would be the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture. Roberto Clemente High School is one of many to potentially partner with, as well as the Union League Boys and Girls Club, the senior residences within the Paseo Boricua Apartments,



the 12th and 14th district's CAPS programs, the Division Street Business Development Association, and the entire Humboldt Park community.

***Chicago's Story is Our Story*** will impact the people of the city of Chicago in the following ways:

1. Include grants to host organizations used to employ displaying artists, storytellers, and photographers.
2. Provide youth services that give them the opportunity to use their free time in more constructive and creative ways and will introduce them to the world of art. (Youth project services can be done through After-School Programs and during summer vacation.)
3. Provide workshops and lectures that can address important community concerns and use art exhibitions to create solutions.
4. Offer activities to Senior Citizens that allow them to engage with others in creative spaces where they can also share their stories about growing up in a particular neighborhoods of Chicago or arriving here as an immigrant.
5. Promotes concept of creating art everywhere and addresses the art desert issue by including those communities.
6. Deters violence and beautifies the city's neighborhoods. (Art is rarely tagged or destroyed within the city of Chicago.)
7. Helps create dialogue on how to address gentrification and allows new audiences to learn the history of a community through art, storytelling, and photography.
8. Engages Chicago's business communities by providing space or dollars for art forms to be displayed in or outside of their businesses. (Provides community benefit knowing that the resources they provide will help employ artists and engage students and seniors.)
9. Increase in tourism and consumer spending at local businesses in each neighborhood. (The Business community's investment will have a return through this increase in neighborhood visitorship and spending.)
10. Involves all of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods.

NMPAC suggests that within the first 100 days, every neighborhood in Chicago has the projects first components in place, which require the identification of teams consisting of these five areas:

1. Arts and cultural host organizations
1. Artists, storytellers, and photographers
2. Student organizations and educational institutions
3. Senior living residences
4. Business and Chamber of Commerce
5. Police departments and CAPS

For long-term implementation:

1. Install art exhibitions in each of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods.
2. Illustrate and record the description and history of all of Chicago's communities.

Potential challenges we may face include finding artists and/or arts organizations in areas known to be art deserts.

3015 West Division Street Chicago, IL | 773.486.8345 | [info@NMPRAC.org](mailto:info@NMPRAC.org)

**“Where Preservation Meets Inspiration”**

Thank you for the honor of serving on this committee as a Co-chair.

My thoughts .....

- 1) We always hear that the arts are important to the human spirit, in promoting education, that it serves as an economical engine (which are all correct), but we never hear that the arts are essential to a strong democracy. We are living in very perilous times when our fundamental human and constitutional rights are being threatened, we need to have and promote an understanding that the arts are essential to our democracy.
- 2) As a founder of an arts organization thirty-two years ago located in the community, I have been hearing about the importance of communities for forever and yet year after year, one can sum up the city's commitment to communities in one-word - NADA ...nothing! We have many vibrant arts organizations located in communities who do super important work but are woefully underfunded and under-appreciated. Cultural plans are nice, but there must be funds committed by city officials to communities.
- 3) I think everyone realizes that the city has a very severe budget crisis, but quite frankly, the city seems to always have a severe budget crisis and yet funds seem to have been available for many causes, but not for the arts and especially, not for arts in the communities.
- 4) It is important that we not only talk about and promote equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation as hallmarks of our city, but we also make a commitment to anti-racism. We must face this evil head-on and work diligently to demonstrate that this city will not tolerate racism at any level. The arts at the large cultural institutions, unfortunately, have too often been elitist and racist and have excluded many people.
- 5) In the promotion of the city as a global city and global destination, it's always the same downtown cultural institutions that are highlighted. One would think that the city boundaries are Diversey to Roosevelt and the lakefront to Halsted. This has to change.
- 6) There are many city lots and buildings not being utilized to their full potential that could be turned over to community arts groups.
- 7) As a President of a free museum, I wholeheartedly support the free admission policy of the Cultural Center and Millennium Park and advocate for maintaining this inclusive practice.
- 8) We must eliminate the term "major cultural organizations" in describing the large cultural organizations. Descriptions of quality for arts organizations should not be based on the size of one's building or budget, but on the quality of work being done by that organization. If one uses the term major in this way, then there are numerous major arts organizations in communities throughout Chicago.
- 9) Chicago is home to a large number of extremely talented artists and arts groups in so many artistic disciplines. DCASE needs to receive more city funding to support this wonderful creative asset.
- 10) DCASE needs to create a Department of Education. The exhibits and programs offered by DCASE should be complemented and enhanced with educational programming.
- 11) Too many neighborhood "festivals" are really "beer festivals". There needs to be a serious evaluation of how these festivals need to promote cultural activities that serve these communities.

- 12) The arts have too often been neglected in our schools. With the testing insanity emphasis that has become the norm, too many schools shy away from the arts. The City needs to actively work with CPS to help them better understand that study after study, has clearly demonstrated the many benefits of a strong school arts program in so many areas, including academic improvement.
- 13) As an important “cradle” of jazz, blues, and gospel music. The City should seriously study what it can do to assist and promote these Chicago treasures.
- 14) Chicago is the home of over two hundred theaters and is arguably the best theater town in the nation, unfortunately people of color have too often been left out. This in spite of the fact that there is so much exceptional people of color theater talent in the city. There have been many white theater groups who have received city assistance in establishing their homes and yet there are very few theater spaces serving theater groups of color. For example, in the Latino community, there are only two small theaters in make-shift spaces. It’s time the City commit to working in partnership to create a viable Latino theater space.
- 15) Every City department including DCASE should understand and promote that Chicago is a city of immigrants and that we support all immigrants.

Submitted by Carlos Tortolero

## MEMO

Name: COMMITTEE MEMBER

Transition Committee: Arts and Culture

The goal of this memo, and my one provocation, is to ensure that City departments are arts organization and artist friendly. Is each department doing everything it can to ensure that the creative communities of Chicago have the support of City departments in order to move projects forward? There are three ways that I've identified for this to happen.

My first recommendation for the Mayor-Elect is to interview each department head and their leadership teams, and to undertake an assessment of what they're currently doing to bolster the arts from within their departments. I especially recommend this for the Department of Buildings, Department of Planning and Development, Department of Streets and Sanitation, Department of Transportation, as well as the Police and Fire Departments. The goal shouldn't exclusively focus on the advancement of large, established organizations. The goal should focus on establishing ways for platforms to be created for smaller organizations so that they too can benefit from the creative forces of the City.

My second recommendation for the Mayor-Elect would be to identify the creation of cultural districts – perhaps fifteen districts throughout the city. These cultural districts might be places where new resources could be distributed to support preexisting organizations, or to encourage aggregated creativity among various organizations. For example, if the Old Town School of Folk Music is already making an impact, are there other smaller organizations that could work with Old Town to create new potential opportunities? If eta Creative Arts Foundation is in the process developing a new project, is there a way to draw on other initiatives happening around eta? This cultural district language would have to be a language that was either dusted off, if already existing in the cultural plan, or made from a fresh start. The formation of arts districts would be a productive way to get all City departments committed.

My concluding point takes focus from the City's preexisting grant program for individual artists. I would like to recommend that the City find ways to not only encourage this artist grant, but to parlay artist activity and initiatives with abandoned buildings. This would allow for a unification of abandoned buildings that are small and simple with organizations and artists who want to use them to create new cultural opportunities, and get them off the tax roll, or put them on the tax roll. Can we encourage the creation of smaller galleries like "apartment galleries", by giving a

variance on the use of apartments for creatives? Can we turn spaces in Pilsen into zoned and designated artist spaces? That would require a new ordinance and a simple application, and then making more of these processes transparent so that once the opportunity is out there, a clear path is implemented from one's idea to the completion of that idea.

Thank you.

**TO:** Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

**FROM:** Committee Member

**PROMPT:** What is happening today that we need to keep/what we need to implement in the next 100 days....

**Overview:**

Use already existing resources like DCASE to strengthen and support the connection between the people living in the neighborhoods to the arts, and other local organizations and business. Learn about the best local gathering places in each community and support those spaces, as- a- way -to, invite local cultural organizations and artists to present their work and invite the residents to a conversation about what they would love to see in their neighborhoods, and how artists/mayor's office can support that. This could help artists strengthen ties between their own work and that of the needs of the communities they work in as well.

Identify and select Arts Mentors from organizations that have succeeded in having a transformative impact upon the neighborhoods where they are located – Theaster Gates' *Rebuild Foundation*, with sites like Stony Island Arts Bank, David Feiner, of *Albany Park Theater Project*, Coya Paz *Free Street Theatre*, Michael Patrick Thornton of *Gift Theatre* in Jefferson Park. Organizations like *Build, Inc.*, *Unsilence Chicago*, *Young Chicago Authors*, and many others. these arts leaders have held true to an intention of braiding together their cultural organizations with the life and vibrancy of their neighborhoods. These leaders and others demonstrate that the arts can be the vital and lively enterprises right next door. These leaders can tell you what is missing in their neighborhoods, and what the arts need to do to be successful in their communities. This Initiative would seek to support the wisdom of such leaders by making them City Art Mentors, who pass on their experiences to a specific community that is interested in building bridges to the arts and culture of their neighborhood.

**Implement in the next 100 days**

Acknowledge the work that these and other smaller organizations have been doing for years in their community by giving them a leadership role in transforming neighborhoods.

Connect them and support them within their own community as well as the organizations that would want mentoring. Meet with them as a group or individually. Seek out the small activist groups that work in these communities and start building trust with them.



**TO:** Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

**FROM:** Hector Duarte, Muralist and Member of Chicago Public Art Group

**PROPOSED INITIATIVE: Declare the arts a new priority and critical part of education within Chicago Public Schools**

The arts have been cut to the bone within Chicago Public Schools, largely due to budget cuts and a focus on improving reading and math.

**Chicago should completely reverse course and announce that the arts are now a core subject and a priority in CPS.** Every school should be guaranteed two full-time arts teachers (schools could choose between visual arts, music, dance, theater, poetry, etc.).

In addition to two full-time art teachers, schools should be given additional arts budgets to hire artists or arts organizations for residencies and class visits and for arts-based field trips. Rhetoric from the city and school district should make it clear that art is no longer an “extra.” Arts education should begin seriously in the earliest grades.

The announcement that Chicago is focusing on the arts could make national headlines—it would run counter to everything else happening nationwide in education—and would attract both artists and parents to the school district.

Artists generate innovation in a city and help spur economic growth. If artists know there are opportunities for work here, Chicago can become a more hospitable town for artists to make a living. The capacity of groups like Marwen, After School Matters, Chicago Public Art Group, Yolocalli, the Chicago Children’s Choir, and many others that connect professional artists with young people, could expand exponentially if arts were made a priority in CPS.

In our segregated school system, art is a discipline that unites. Schools with an emphasis on the arts have often seen more success in integration (Chi-Arts is one of the only integrated charter high schools in the city, for instance). The arts are valued by Chicagoans from every background—whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians—and artistic talent is present in children from every background. A focus on the arts can be an intentional desegregation tool. And with many schools cutting the arts, if Chicago doubles down on art, the district would stand out regionally as a distinct choice for parents.

In the Next 100 Days this initiative/new priority could be announced, and funding secured for the 2019-20 school year.

This initiative would promote the values of equity, diversity and inclusion, and transformation. As regards transparency and accountability, the school district should report to the public what types of art teachers are present in each school, and publish the total arts budgets for each school.

**DATE: April 15, 2019**

**TO:** Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

**FROM:** Hector Duarte, Muralist and Member of Chicago Public Art Group

**PROPOSED INITIATIVE: Expand mural restoration and creation, with a focus on Chicago's neighborhoods.**

Chicago is recognized as a historic birthplace and a national leader of the Community Mural Movement/community arts movement. The city should claim and maintain that history by *restoring historically significant neighborhood murals and commissioning new ones that speak to our communities.*

Many murals that are a part of Chicago's community mural movement's legacy are in disrepair and some, like the historically significant "All of Mankind" by William Walker (painted originally in 1973 in the former Cabrini-Green neighborhood) have been brazenly painted over or destroyed.

Chicago nonprofit organizations have already done the groundwork necessary to begin restoration of murals and design/creation of new ones. The Chicago Public Art Group has commissioned an inventory of the city's community murals and has identified murals in need of immediate restoration. (Some of this work has begun with extremely limited funding; for instance, some historic community murals along the 16<sup>th</sup> Street viaduct in Pilsen have been restored:

<http://www.chicagopublicartgroup.org/restoration-initiative>). Restoration work could begin within 100 days by professional mural artists. In some cases, the original artist (or assistants who worked with him/her on the original) may still be living and able to restore their work. Depending upon the situation, it may be possible to involve youth in restoration work, training them and connecting them to the history and art of their neighborhoods.

***Chicago also lags far behind other cities in the creation of new public art works.***

In Philadelphia, the Mural Arts Program commissions between 60 and 100 murals in the neighborhoods EVERY YEAR (<https://www.muralarts.org/about/>). Chicago's public art program has been limited mostly to the "1 Percent for Art" program. This has placed public works in libraries, police stations and train stations. While important, this program has not created the scale of works needed to truly transform neighborhoods and impact how neighbors feel about their communities. It has also, for the most part, failed to broadly involve communities in the production of art. If we truly believe that art transforms public spaces and

individual lives, we must dramatically expand what is happening in the neighborhoods in regards to public art and murals.

In recent years, the city of Chicago has tended to view its role in public art as that of “collector,” with the concern being to amass art holdings of significance and value for the city. That approach is certainly understandable, but it has also blinded Chicago from seeing the potential value murals and other community-created public art projects can provide. We should view community-based public art as a tool to address all sorts of issues facing the city. Murals and public art can play a role in public health, for instance—as a tool to address mental health or violence. They are an economic and community development tool. They inject pride in communities, helping neighborhoods tell their own stories and shape an identity independent from the media. Critically, they help children shape a positive view of themselves, their neighborhoods, and their city. Dramatically expanding mural work created with neighborhood-based artists in collaboration with communities can be transformative for all involved.

Chicago has community organizations with deep experience pairing professional artists with youth or other community members. These include the Chicago Public Art Group, Marwen, Urban Gateways, After School Matters and others. This work can and should be dramatically expanded—and every economically disinvested neighborhood or community facing displacement should be prioritized for this effort.

I am a 30-year resident of Pilsen. For many years I saw that, despite gang violence in our community, our neighborhood’s murals were an attraction for school groups and cultural tourists from other parts of the city or suburbs (or even out of state). I believe the same is possible for neighborhoods today that are socially and economically isolated. Public art can be a reason for Chicagoans to visit neighborhoods they currently have no connection to. Art builds bridges, and in Chicago, it can begin to build paths toward a less segregated, divided city.

This initiative would promote the values of equity, diversity and inclusion, and transformation.

**DATE: April 15, 2019**

Name: Heather Ireland Robinson

Transition Committee: Arts & Culture

Potential Initiative: Grants for artists dedicated to creating arts and creative opportunities where the people of the city – specifically our youth – live, learn and play.

These grants would be designed for artists and creatives to create accessible programs in schools, libraries, and atypical neighborhood spaces as a form of place-making and community building.

### **Background & Personal Experience: A Testimony**

I was born and raised on the south side of Chicago and was blessed to grow up in a family that valued the arts. Our home was filled with soul, jazz and classical music, we were afforded trips to museums, plays, galleries and dance shows. There were crayons, clay and paints everywhere. We were not raised to be artists, but to be creative thinkers and well-rounded citizens who know how to have fun.

I firmly believe that the arts are an intrinsic human right and a basic human need. These experiences can be as elaborate as classes or as simple as having crayons in the home and arts in the schools.

For over 20 years I have had the honor of serving the arts and culture community of the city of Chicago. I started this journey with a Neighborhood Arts Program Grant from the city of Chicago. These grants were offered to individuals who wanted to share the arts in their communities. The fact that these were offered to individuals with limited experience (no scary or daunting 501c3 paperwork/status needed, no long track record of programming required) and provided the opportunity for artists with community programming ideals the chance to pay themselves (a vital function that has been removed recently from the current City Arts grant) made this an ideal grant and helped start me on a path to arts administration. I personally used the grant to teach theatre at the South Shore Cultural Center which grew into a small children's theatre company over the years. The grant provided me with both an economic and artistic opportunity.

### **Values**

Equity – Though this value would be inherent in the delivery of programs, art projects and creative opportunities, by leveling the playing field and making sure that all artists – no matter their career level – can apply or participate this program is made even more equitable.

Transparency – Listen to the community and gain true input about what is needed and what would be best for the application process– from residents, civic leaders, business owners, and the artists. When awarded, share who gets the grants and why. When hit with a question or an impasse, take it to the community to find the answer. Create an Arts & Culture Task Force/Committee that includes more than just leadership from arts organizations and established creatives.

Accountability – Use diversity and inclusion goals and metrics used in other industries to measure success. Work with the arts and administrative communities to develop a rubric of these goals as they apply to the arts.

Diversity and Inclusion – It is status quo that grants are available to those in the know, those who are connected and those who have the resources, experience, knowledge and talent to write and submit them.

Questions that should be explored include - how can a wide net be cast to include creatives at all levels? How can the word be spread? Is granting the way to go or is there another way to infuse these resources into communities for them to blossom into opportunities for young people . . . and the adults in the neighborhoods who may have also grown up without the arts but who should be included and would benefit? What do communities truly want and need by way of the arts?

Transformation – I see neighborhoods lit by new murals that are reflective of the people who live there, created by, for, and with them. I hear corner lots infused with the drumming of drop-in dance classes and the rhythm of music experiences. I see children and families loads a little lighter and lives a little brighter because they are never more than 5 blocks away from art or creative opportunities. I see artists confident in knowing there are more economic opportunities available from them, and being authentically engaged because their voices are being heard.

### **What is happening today that we need to keep?**

Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events – through all of its changes DCASE has been a wonderful interface for the community to be connected to the city and its resources by taking down silos and breaking walls by listening and providing grants to artists and organizations.

Keep all music festivals – but make them even more accessible. Current administration has done a solid job of ensuring the clubs are connected and that music happens in the neighborhoods the week before the Jazz Festival. This idea could be scaled and grown to have a greater impact in the neighborhoods and to offer more economic opportunity to artists participating in the festivals. This initiative should also be a part of every of music festival.

**What we need to implement in the next 100 days.** The new administration should hit the ground running with a clear message that it is important for the arts to thrive and grow. If the current grants are being kept, please share that this is so. As much as possible it will be important to the arts community to know what changes are happening and how this affects them. Being fully transparent from the beginning by sharing the inspirational objectives that we as the committee already know will go a long way toward engendering trust and keeping the arts community alive and connected to your vision.

**What we can plan for longer-term implementation.** It is vital that the grant amounts should grow and be continuously improved and developed per the needs of a changing landscape. Exploring ways to engage foundations and private funders for long-term investment and support could guarantee more sustainability. For other programming, connecting organizations with larger city institutions and departments (Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Libraries, Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago Public Schools, Public Health, Transportation, Children & Family Services) could increase, develop and maintain resources – from the tangible such and financial, human, infrastructure, space to the intangible but necessary such as program structure, ideas, staffing/human resource and beyond.

**What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative.** There will always be the issue of – is there enough? As wide a net as the program should cast, and as deep as that net should go there will always be a section of the community who is missed. Of those who are reached, it will be imperative to ensure that they are well prepared to manage the financial and programmatic responsibilities that would come with funding. Though the goal is to break down these barriers, supports should be put in place so that individuals and newly-formed organizations have the tools to grow and thrive into the future and beyond this grant in and amid the larger pool of donors, program and organizational development.

# memo

To: Arts & Culture Transition Committee and Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot  
From: Jacqueline Russell, Founder & Artistic Director, Chicago Children's Theatre  
Date: 15 April 2019  
Re: **chI-CREATE**

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It is my great pleasure and honor to share with you my potential initiative, which I have titled:

## **chI-CREATE**

The City of Chicago puts great emphasis and resources into providing access to sports and athletics for our citizenry. Across our city on any given day, you'll find men, women, and children of all ages working out, jogging, kicking soccer balls, biking, playing in softball leagues, joining pick-up games on basketball courts, and enjoying so many other forms of athletic activity; even ice-skating and kayaking are available in my own neighborhood of Irving Park. There is much to celebrate, admire, and appreciate about Chicago's commitment to physical fitness.

### **But What About the Arts?**

So, where are Chicago's community theatre productions that invite citizens of all ages and abilities to play and perform? Where are the dance recitals featuring amateur, senior-aged tap dancers and ballerinas—people who dance for hobby and enjoyment, not for vocation? The multi-generational mosaic project? Choral groups?

A study for New York City's Culture and Social Wellbeing project was conducted from 2014-2017 by the University of Pennsylvania, commissioned by the NYC Cultural Agenda Fund. This study's authors write that "in lower income neighborhoods, when we control statistically for economic wellbeing, race and ethnicity, we find that the presence of cultural resources is significantly associated with positive social outcomes around health, schooling and security."

### **Chicago's Children**

I can attest as the founder of Chicago Children's Theatre that we as an institution—like many dedicated arts organizations in Chicago—work with hundreds of professional artists, administrators, civic leaders and educators to keep the arts alive and accessible for Chicago's children, through summer camps, in-school arts residencies, free field trips, and after school programs. These allow students to experience and learn from professionally-made theatre.

We present relevant and contemporary drama to classrooms in schools throughout Chicago's 50 wards. And we work especially hard to provide theatre-arts experiences for students with visual and hearing impairments, and for children with autism. We know through years of investigation and documentation that this work has long-lasting impact on the lives and futures of children who participate in the arts.

This essential work is possible thanks to support from DCASE, Ingenuity, CAPE, Prince Charitable, Chicago Park District, the NEA, the IAC, the Chicago Community Trust, Polk Bros., MacArthur, Pritzker Family Foundation, Paul M. Angell Family, Invest for Kids, ComEd and many, many other generous funders. These school-focused programs still face many challenges, and we must continue to expand them in order to reach more students. But in my decades working in Chicago's arts community, many of the most successful and rewarding city-wide initiatives I've experienced and participated in have served Chicago's kids.

### **Who Else Gets to Play?**

But what happens when our young people age out of our schools and Park District summer arts programs? Should participation in the arts for enjoyment and socializing stop when children become adults? Should we then only focus on keeping our bodies in working order, but not our spirits?

Experiencing and making art that is unique and personally expresses something about the human condition is a right, not a privilege – not just for the privileged, not just for the young, and not just for the professional art maker. My own grandmother was an amateur painter who had an art studio in her garage where, into her late 70s, she remained active by teaching her neighbors still-life and portrait painting. On a recent trip to Italy, I learned that most dance studios there traditionally dedicate their summer hours to amateur dancers of all ages, enabling them to learn and rehearse pieces and ultimately perform them in dance concerts presented in their communities. These concerts are part of the fabric of these communities; everyone comes out to celebrate and support these non-professional dancers.

The shared experience of making and enjoying the arts must be accessible to all Chicagoans regardless of age, ability or geographic location. Funding from city agencies, along with funds from partnering private foundations, needs to go toward providing community-based teaching artists, supplies and equipment, and performance venues that give everyday Chicagoans the opportunity and place to work out their creative muscles, to exercise their imaginations, to strengthen their empathy for one another and to build more connective communities, and actively engaged citizens.

Art-making can help us to address loneliness, inequality, isolation, and a myriad of mental health issues, building bonds that make us a stronger city.

### **Put the Arts in Everyone's Backyard**

Theatre, dance, music, and mural painting should be as easy to discover and take part in within one's own neighborhood as using a gym, Pilates studio, basketball court, bike trail or soccer field. Most of Chicago's thriving arts assets are located in affluent neighborhoods. Let's work to identify each neighborhood's unique ecology and character. Let's aim to create "arts coalitions" across all 77 Chicago neighborhoods led by local ambassadors, identified by their own community to then inform and spearhead these initiatives in their own backyards. To do this, I suggest engaging local leaders—chambers of commerce, churches, community centers, social service agencies and educators—who will partner with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events to hold public engagement meetings in their neighborhoods—at a library or a Park District field house, or even at a nail parlor or barber shop—to openly share their desires and insights about how the arts can uplift, enhance and transform their neighborhood.

### **Buy & Grow Local**

Let's not erase or replace the existing artists in any community, but identify and better support and mentor them. Priority should be placed on hiring community-based artists and arts organizations who are identified and awarded grants at a neighborhood and/or ward level. We should also create an online, searchable database for connecting communities with local artists, spaces and cultural institutions. This is a way to begin achieving equity and inclusion in our arts sourcing and funding.

Initially, spaces within the Chicago Park District and Chicago Public Libraries can provide accessible rooms and administrative resources, as well as act as a central hub for networking and promotion of these arts activities. Here is also an opportunity to identify and leverage underutilized spaces and/or reutilization of city assets in many low-income neighborhoods. We can target blocks that will be enhanced and made safer with more lighting and activity created by after-school and after-work art making and sharing.

### **Provide Significant and Measurable Multi-year Grants**

Modest planning grants should provide these local arts coalitions with technical and financial support to determine which creative outlets speak most to their community needs and interests. After that planning phase, more support will be provided by government and foundation grants for the implementation and evaluation of these new neighborhood offerings.

I propose that initial funding come from the City of Chicago, partnering with local private foundations. Funding should be multi-year to allow for successful planning, implementation and evaluation of desired outcomes. Grants should be awarded to all 50 wards of our city. Some wards may have more established arts organizations and others may have fledgling organizations or individual artists who, with technical assistance and mentorship, can be tasked to create opportunities for intergenerational artistic play and expression in their own backyard.

Measurement of success should be based on ranges of ages and abilities of the participants, along with the number of hours and opportunities that these artists have provided to their neighbors.

In conclusion, chl-CREATE will provide a framework and resources to achieve equitable participation in arts and culture—access that is vital to creating healthy citizens and neighborhoods and ensuring that Chicago and its people continue to flourish.





**BETTER  
TOGETHER  
CHICAGO**

325 N. LaSalle Drive, Suite 300  
Chicago, IL 60654

To: Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

From: Joe Shanahan

(a) what is happening today that we need to keep:

DCASE and its incorporation of the year of music / theatre concepts.  
the continuation of dialogue between promoters / clubs / venues and DCASE talent buyers / programing arm of DCASE.

(b) what we need to implement immediately; or within the next year;

support of local djs / bands / performers in private and public venues.  
programs that could get started in neighborhoods and culminate to a petrillo / millennium park concert series.  
incorporation and sharing of the private sector and the public / city of shared ideas and programing to enhance the global city that chicago is and has become.  
a night mayor, other cities have a night mayor or night board that creates a solid dialogue about and with the creative economy. Amsterdam is the one i would point too, i have met them and stayed in contact with them.

(c) what we can plan for longer-term implementation

bigger picture...keep the small venues as the incubator's for creative / cultural economy.  
neighborhood venues that create jobs / revenue for surroundings small business.  
help venues with incentives, possible tax advantages / city funded events ie....world music / house music / blues / jazz fest incorporation.  
have the city and small venues network to collaborate and explore additional global strategies.

## **MEMO: Arts & Culture Transition Committee**

**DATE:** April 15, 2019

**TO:** Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

**FROM:** Kevin Iga Jeff

**OBJECTIVE:** Leverage cultural assets to foster economic growth and inclusion.

**POTENTIAL INITIATIVE:** Story-Bridge Workshops — A Play In A Day

**THE CHALLENGE:** On the down side, Chicago is entrenched in systems that perpetuate racism, inequality, segregation and economic disparity. A machine, shackled by its gangster past and redlined aspirations. On the upside, Chicago is you, me, and a diverse citizenry that desires to know, affirm, and love each other.

**THE CHARGE:** How can the new administration help infuse the values of equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation in this initiative.

Transformation requires practice. A creative cultural practice that engages Chicago stakeholders in a revealing process of human discovery can bring people into relationship and shifting points of views.

Art is how we can know, grow, and flow together, not an elite form offering itself across the footlights to a darkened mass. The center of artistic energy remains where it always has been, with the creators. But the creators included people who self-designate as artists and people who don't.

Through telling and performing personal and community stories, the Story Bridge process enables individuals, organizations and communities to build social cohesion among diverse people, catalyze high creativity generated from radical difference, and create beloved community. Story Bridge creates a generative social space to:

- Hold and honor authentic stories from diverse people around challenging topics, and
- Envision, share, and embody emergent stories of co-thriving

Story Bridge is based on a deep truth: the fundamental assets of any community are its stories. Drawing on the social synergy of people sharing and performing each other's diverse stories, Story Bridge flows through **Story, Performance, Affinity, Conversation and Engagement (S.P.A.C.E.)** to create a generative social space across divides. In this space the impossible becomes possible, and diverse people can cross the Story Bridge to the beloved community they desire.

**OUTCOMES:** The community (politicians, business and community leaders, clergy, the homeless, seniors, teens, youth, etc.) will discover an empowered sense of mission, shared identity, enhanced opportunity and heightened energy in service to the community. Beginning by creating a welcoming safe place to which they can bring their whole selves, participants, from 20 to 80 people of diverse ages and backgrounds, will express authentically and be witnessed without judgment. They will share and enact their stories of triumph and challenge. They will deepen in their commitment to one another and the community. From their synergy an evolutionary purpose for the community will emerge and pave the way for deep dialogue, action and planning for a thriving community.

Particularly, community participants will be better able to:

1. Evaluate and authentically communicate their values and beliefs.
2. Develop deep empathy, understanding, and bonds for one another across divides.
3. Build spiritual, emotional and psychological power to collaborate as an integrated creative community.
4. Jump start important social campaigns.

**AS IT PERTAINS TO THIS INITIATIVE:**

o **What is happening today that we need to keep:** Prioritizing ongoing strategic communal engagement throughout Chicago.

o **What we need to implement in the next 100 days:** A process for ongoing creative practice for relationship building and engagement.

o **What we can plan for longer-term implementation:** An annual Story-Bridge or like process that produces similar results.

o **What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative:** The misplaced belief that creative cultural practice isn't personally relevant or an effective use of time and resources.

Please send this summary in a two-page memo to your Committee's email account (the same email account from which you received your invitation letter and this attachment).



**Name:** Katie Tuten, Chicago Independent Venue League (CIVL) Co Chair

**Transition Committee:** Arts & Culture

**Prompt:** How do we reposition Chicago as a “Music City” that strengthens the local music ecosystem and promotes the power of all Community Areas within Chicago?

**Initiative: (equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation)**

Develop a “Music City” Advisory Board & Economic Advisory Council that allows for a bottom up feedback.

- Refocus decision making from the ground up which include local voices.
- Bring diversity and inclusion to the decision-making process that includes grassroots music community from within all neighborhoods from across the city
- There must be a clear mandate and terms of reference for the advisory board and all involved must understand them. There must be clear and transparent communication to the public about the mandate and terms of reference of the board.
- The board should advise city council or a body of city council rather than a city department; city staff and officials are resources to the board and will be able to tap into board insights.

**What is happening today that we need to keep**

Robust and thriving independent live music venues

**What we need to implement in the next 100 days:**

- Connect with the authors of Key to a Music City: Examining the merits of Music Offices, Boards and Night Mayors. Many of the ideas expressed in this document come from this publication.
  - Toronto is a Sister City to Chicago and the drivers of their music strategy are making themselves available as a resource to CIVL.
- Send representative(s) of the Transition Team to 2019 Music Policy Forum Summit in Toronto the weekend of May 11<sup>th</sup>. Note: Members of CIVL will be attending the Music Policy Summit.
- Solicit nominations and appoint members for the “Music City” Advisory Board & Economic Advisory Council
  - Representation of the diverse facets of the of music community
  - Demographic priorities (gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, geographic representation)
  - Establish Sub Committees that can offer additional perspectives
- Secure funding ...perhaps from World Business Chicago; not staff but funding to staff the independent consultants.
- Outline the key functions, responsibilities, organizational alignments of the Music City Advisory Board
  - Work in partnership with the Music Census Group – see initiative Development of a Music Census.

- Develop strategies for cutting expenses and generating more revenue through the creative economy.
- Develop policies around building safe spaces to prevent sexual harassment, bullying and/or violence.

**What we can plan for long term implementation:**

- On going financial support from the city
- Advise city hall on matters related to music
- Help to set the city's priorities as they relate to the music sector
- Help to frame the city's music strategy

**What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative:**

- Funding
- DCASE may wish to lead this initiative but its important that the Advisory Council report directly to city hall.



Name: Katie Tuten, Chicago Independent Venue League (CIVL) Co Chair

Transition Committee: Arts & Culture

Prompt: How do we reposition Chicago as a “Music City” that strengthens the local music ecosystem and promotes the power of all Community Areas within Chicago

**Initiative: (equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation)**

Develop Chicago Music Commission

- Governed by a Board of Directors. “Arms-Length”
- Created by the city government but governed by a Board.
- Mandate that exceeds advisory role.
- An external and independent body can be more effective in forming a mandate and pushing it onto the public agenda.
- Wider engagement of the community that is more extensive than a traditional advisory council Refocus decision making from the ground up which include local voices.
- Bring diversity and inclusion to the decision-making process that includes grassroots music community from within all neighborhoods from across the city
- There must be a clear mandate. There must be clear and transparent communication to the public about the mandate and terms of reference of the board.
- The board should advise city council or a body of city council rather than a city department; city staff and officials are resources to the board and will be able to tap into board insights.
- Ability to authentically represent the voice of the music community and industry and thereby exercise that influence as the primary external advocate

**What is happening today that we need to keep**

Robust and thriving independent live music venues

**What we need to implement in the next 100 days:**

- Connect with the authors of Key to a Music City: Examining the merits of Music Offices, Boards and Night Mayors. Many of the ideas expressed in this document come from this document.
  - Toronto is a Sister City to Chicago and the drivers of their music strategy are making themselves available as a resource to CIVL.
- Send representative(s) of the Transition Team to 2019 Music Policy Forum Summit in Toronto the weekend of May 11<sup>th</sup>. Note: Members of CIVL will be attending the Music Policy Summit.
- Solicit nominations and appoint members for Chicago Music Commission
  - Representation of the diverse facets of the of music community
  - Demographic priorities (gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, geographic representation)
  - Establish Sub Committees that can offer additional perspectives

- Secure funding from multiple sources foundations and government entities perhaps from World Business Chicago; not staff but funding to staff the independent consultants.
- Outline the key functions, responsibilities, organizational alignments of the Chicago Music Commission
  - Work in partnership with the Music Census Group – see initiative Development of a Music Census.
  - Develop policies around building safe spaces to prevent sexual harassment, bullying and/or violence.

**What we can plan for long term implementation:**

- On going financial support from the city
- Determine strategic plan for funding sustainability
- Build strong relationships with city government and staff.
- Advise city hall on matters related to music
- Help to set the city's priorities as they relate to the music sector
- Help to frame the city's music strategy
- Continue to build community engagement into activities and approach.

**What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative:**

- Funding



Name: Katie Tuten; Chicago Independent Venue League (CIVL) and Hideout

#### **Transition Committee: Arts & Culture**

**Prompt:** The Chicago music scene is generally regarded as one of the most vibrant and culturally important communities in the world. It sometimes feels, however, that the ecosystem that makes up this scene is not fully understood or appreciated. In an era where cities across the globe are investing in research to understand their local scenes and strategies to help them thrive, Chicago should take the next step to document and support the music ecosystem.

**Initiative: (equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation)**

- Implement the Chicago Music Ecosystem Study
- Be sure that the study includes grassroots music community from within all neighborhoods from across the city

#### **What is happening today that we need to keep**

Robust and thriving independent live music venues

Dust off the Cultural Plan 2012 and review and evaluate the data in reference to music specifically.

#### **What we need to implement in the next 100 days:**

- Outline the goals and objectives of a Music Census
- Send a Transition Team representative to the Music Summit in Toronto May 11<sup>th</sup> weekend. CIVL is sending two representatives to Toronto.
  - Toronto is a Sister City to Chicago and the drivers of their music strategy are making themselves available as a resource to CIVL.
- Hire the consultants to role out the Music Census.

#### **What we can plan for long term implementation:**

1. Qualitative interviews and focus groups with music community leaders -- artists, labels, venues, festivals, fans and others -- to understand WHY the Chicago scene is held in such great regard. These interviews will also address how music impacts quality of life for Chicago residents, generates income via cultural tourism and helps make Chicago a center for businesses looking to relocate.

2. Quantitative research in terms of a music census. Cities across America are investing in data-driven research to understand the economics of their music scenes to ensure that whatever policies or strategies they develop are rooted in a real understanding of the economics of the local scene.

3. Connecting with leaders across North America and Europe to understand how strategies and solutions employed in other communities could be adapted for the unique characteristics of Chicago. This includes sending delegations of Chicago music and city leaders on site visits to relevant cities, attending conferences and gatherings of music policy experts and hosting a series of workshops and events in Chicago to bring these thought leaders and strategies to Chicago.



The project could be overseen by the nonprofit Music Policy Forum in partnership with a steering committee made up of different stakeholders in the Chicago Music Community.

**What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative:**

Funding

Including other arts initiatives – it is important that this census focus on Music.

To: Mayor Elect Lori Lightfoot

From: Kristina Valada-Viars

Prompt: Leverage cultural assets to build a more equitable arts ecosystem/all zip code access

Potential Initiative: Redirect tourism tax dollars generated by the city directly to empower individual artists in each of Chicago's 50 wards by way of Change Making Grants to make work where they live and participate in a city-wide representative arts council for the grant year.

What would it look like if the city meaningfully invested in individual artists to make/create/engage where they live? How radically different could our neighborhoods look if we had local artists in each ward engaged in (and compensated for) community development strategies that (1) prioritize development without displacement in all communities and (2) build relationships and engage with community members as stakeholders in the conversations in currently existing platforms with an artistic lens (CAPS meetings, town halls, etc.) and (3) engage with other similarly deposed artists of all disciplines from wards across the city. The output from such an act of faith in the arts community of Chicago is impossible to predict, but the commitment to values of transparency and equity would be apparent in this bold move of equal disbursement of funds among all 50 wards. We cannot claim a commitment to equity without being equal in our new initiatives. And we cannot continue to rely on volunteerism from our artists if we want to make diversity a priority.

The 3Arts model has done incredible career altering work with individual artists with little or no restrictions on how those funds are used. I would like to see city tourism tax dollars go to making several 3Arts style grants available in every Chicago ward, every year, with the only restrictions to the award being: (1) that the artist recipient must live in the ward for which they are receiving the award, (2) present at least one project with a community focus that the ward grant can subsidize, and (3) serve on a citywide arts council with all other award recipients that meets quarterly during the grant period. The committee that approves submissions/nominations should be made up of community members (and eventually previous Change Making awardees) and should prioritize face to face engagement with the applicant and the ward-based project proposal as the major award determination component. Awardees will also have access to ongoing career development programs and ongoing membership in the ward arts community. It is important that the application process not prioritize traditional grant writing skills.

First 100 days: There are some extremely prohibitive restrictions in place that negatively impact artistic innovation and small businesses and have restricted community-based development in both of these areas. I would like to see an overhaul of the PPA License process. While everyone wants to make sure inspections happen in public spaces to avoid anything like the Ghost Ship art collective tragedy in 2016, the current PPA licensing process is prohibitive for most individual artists or small aspirational cultural institutions and discourages innovative arts and culture events in Chicago. Please immediately remove prior felony conviction restrictions on obtaining PPA licenses while the license is still required. Other local restrictions that disproportionately affect artists and creative neighborhood-based entrepreneurs that should be addressed immediately include: Home Business, Food Truck, and Home Sharing restrictions.

The first 100 days of the new administration would be an important time to make sure there is an up to date inventory in each ward of the existing arts and culture organizations and train individuals who would help ward artists navigate the city's existing resource landscape. I would like to see the new administration continue to actively engage artists in civic discourse and continue to foster inter-ward dialogue among artists as we begin to cultivate a feeling of hosting guests, both neighbors and visitors, into our home communities.

In speaking to members of my artistic community, the largest contributing factor to considering a career-based move to another city had to do with legitimate fears around sustainability, livability, and opportunities for meaningful career advancement. Not surprisingly, artists have these fears in common with the majority of the gig economy work force and I think artists can contribute meaningfully to the change needed for all in this regard. But I also heard things that worry me as I ask myself about longer-term implementation of this initiative and the overall health of the robust Chicago performing arts community. My belief is that we need radical initiatives to not only empower mid-career artists in crucial moments and meaningfully support new voices to come forward with much needed perspectives, we also need radical initiatives that dare to look at a restructuring of how we support the artists who work in the institutions and small businesses that make our city such a desirable tourist destination. This initiative is a start: a meaningfully supported time with a specific purpose and ideally a new creative peer network for artists in every ward. But. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to make a sustainable home in Chicago for many working artist-contractors. Hopefully as we work in the values of transparency and accountability, we will value each other enough to be truthful about what is simply no longer working and what we need in order to make it work again.

Two things that stood out for me after our first committee meeting was the desire to “un-silo” the arts from larger public discourse and the need for meaningful relationship building in the public and private sphere. Artists can be exceptionally helpful in face to face relationship building and I think that if the ills that plague our current status quo are not to be replicated as we reach for growth, creation of those meaningful relationships should be placed high on any measure of an administration's success.

One of the major challenges I see for any arts-based community initiative is the ineffective incentives for affordable housing in neighborhoods that rapidly gentrify, crippling property taxes on homes and businesses, and pithy development incentives largely ignored by developers. We need community specific protections that extend to all of us that will work together to improve the places where we live. Until those exist, “successful” artist driven development projects put the artists and their community members at risk of displacement. Wards that have already experienced extreme commercialization will have different challenges than those that have not. It will require individualized ways of accounting for success and that will most likely be a unique challenge to a program like this. The city should incentivize any commercial or for-profit developers to invest locally and culturally in the ongoing neighborhood conversation when placing a bid in any ward. I think the long-term result will be a radically transformed and constantly evolving narrative ward map of our city and I think there will be value beyond measure as we work towards creating a better history as our legacy than the one we were given.

**TO:** Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

**FROM:** Dr. Lisa Yun Lee, Co-Chair, Arts & Culture Transition Committee, Executive Director, National Public Housing Museum, Associate Professor of Art History, and Gender and Women's Studies at University of Illinois at Chicago



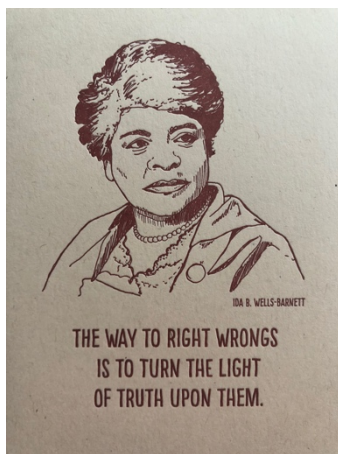
***Chicago's Picasso***

Does man love Art? Man visits Art, but squirms.  
Art hurts. Art urges voyages--  
and it is easier to stay at home...

-Gwendolyn Brooks

**INITIATIVE: Create a Commission to review statuary, monuments, and markers, and immediately fund the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials that is part of the historic Burge Torture Reparations Legislation**

After white supremacists rallied in Charlottesville, Virginia, to protest the removal of a statue of the Confederate general Robert E. Lee, the Mayors of several major cities announced the creation of commissions and panels tasked with evaluating the history of their own city's statuary, monuments and markers. Chicago was a notable exception, and has yet to rise to the important challenge of facing history. The new statue of Gwendolyn Brooks, and the renaming of Ida B. Wells Drive were meaningful and important progress in transforming our cultural landscape to become *more inclusive, diverse, and equitable*. And while our city is not characterized by the same kind of white redemptionism like some cities in the South, our portfolio of statues and monuments is no less fraught. Our monuments tend to celebrate some privileged histories, and revises and traumatically erases others. Reckoning with our collective histories will not be easy or straightforward, but is absolutely essential, and is what we are called to do in these times. This work would embody the values of that you ran on, including those of accountability and transparency.



An important part of this initiative could be to ***immediately commit to realizing and funding*** the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials that was part of the reparations package for the Burge torture survivors and their family members. Passed by the Chicago City Council on May 6, 2015 after decades of grassroots struggle, the city has the opportunity to fulfill its promise by realizing the memorial efforts. As a result of struggle, individual and collective acts of courage, resilience, radical imagination and creativity, landmark reparations were passed in our city. Across the US, sites like the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, have successfully transformed historical sites of trauma and violence into opportunities for collective healing. The CTJM is part of the long legacy of artists and organizers in our city and everywhere to insist that truth and justice, be understood as part of what is beautiful.

**INITIATIVE: Declare the Need for a Chicago Cultural Bill of Rights**

In a true democratic society as well as social and economic rights, we all have creative and cultural rights. The Chicago Cultural Plan was a landmark effort to ensure that neighborhoods across our city had access to the arts. Chicagoans should not only have a right to access beauty, but also the right to determine what is beautiful for ourselves and for our communities. We should continue to build on the foundation laid out by the Chicago Cultural Plan, but insist on a more capacious and inclusive definition of what is recognized as arts and culture, where arts and culture take place, and who is understood as an artist and a cultural worker. In addition, we

must acknowledge the long histories of inequitable funding and support, and using a racial equity lens, redress this by emphasizing the importance of supporting ALANA (African, Latin American, Asian American, and Native American) organizations and communities.

*What is beautiful? And who gets to decide?*



The original murals of Casa Aztlán, a monument of Chicanismo in the Midwest painted by artists including Marcos Raya, Ray Patlan with others, and the *Wall of Respect* on the side of a building at the corner of 43rd St. and Langley Avenue by William Walker and the artists of the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC). Both are no longer in existence (due to gentrification and other forces), but these murals gave birth to Chicago's vibrant street art movement, and of graffiti artists who stake their claim to the city and challenge us every day to ask: who owns the right to the city?



Chicago can become a city that asserts that all inhabitants have the right to creative expression. It is this inventive spirit to create new forms of beauty, to sing new songs, to tell new stories, while valuing our history and traditions that will ensure that we are the most inclusive creative capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Arts and culture are not confined to formal and organized institutions-- for which Chicago has world-class examples that deserve respect and admiration-- they are produced and have been nurtured in Chicago everywhere and every place imaginable: blues in nightclubs, jazz in alleyways, house music in living rooms and abandoned buildings, storefront theater, and vibrant graffiti in underpasses and on buildings. By recognizing and finding ways to acknowledge, support and celebrate these forms of art and culture, we celebrate the best of our ideals as a Chicagoans and as human beings: We embrace a beautiful and more equitable future for all of us.

There has been a dynamic working group convened by the Arts Alliance Illinois, who are already working on articulating the public's desire for, and impact of the arts and culture. I recommend building on these efforts, as well as making the process even more accessible, inclusive and transparent to all.

**Initiative: Ensure that there is a deep commitment to intersectionality and breaking down silos between the arts & culture and other issues like affordable housing, transportation, labor, public health, education, public safety, and neighborhood and economic development- all of which are impacted and affected by the creative ecosystem and economy.**

An Arts & Culture Ombudsperson could be present on all official city committees, and artists might be embedded in all city departments. In this way, artists and cultural workers could be invited to address and tackle many of our city's most seemingly intractable issues, and to lead amazing city transformations through their ability to unleash our imaginations and approach problems from fresh perspectives. Not only should we borrow from innovative practices in other cities (like Bogotá, where former Mayor Antanas Mockus successfully engaged artists to solve issues of violence, citizen engagement, fiscal disarray, traffic, etc.), we should also create new mechanisms to deploy the arts and culture in Chicago in a way that is worthy of our city's legacies.

*Photo & image credits: 1.) Gwendolyn Brooks, courtesy of Chicago Poetry Foundation 2.) Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Blackbird Letterpress 3.) Photo courtesy of Pilsen Alliance, via CityLabs 4.) Wall of Respect, 1967, photograph by Robert Sengstacke*

## MEMO

TO: Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

FROM: Lou Raizin

SUBJECT: The connection between Arts and Culture and Tourism:  
**Why we need to keep feeding the tourism engine for ARTS' sake**

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The city may find more powerful economic opportunities than those tourism may afford, but I would argue that none have a quicker return on investment, and none touch the hearts and soul of the community, like an investment in Arts and Culture.

Art and Culture is serious stuff, it defines who we are. It's expression: our food, our music, our dance, our theater, our art, our religions and celebrations.

Arts and Culture is part of Chicago's DNA, and it is the key reason travelers choose to visit Chicago. Arts and Culture differentiates Chicago from the other cities we compete with for tourism. Today's tourists are experiential collectors; they want authentic, unique experiences that Arts and Culture can provide. The longer we keep a tourist in town, the more they spend. And the further away we draw them from, they spend even more. Moreover, tourists become evangelists for Chicago.

Tourism helps the city's economy grow with relatively little associated expense. In 2018, \$15B was generated by the tourism economy, equating to \$1B in taxes (\$625M to State and \$410M to City) and supporting 148K jobs. The addition of 50 new hotels in 6 years, an average growth in visitors of 20 percent in the last 5 years (6% leisure growth last year alone) and international growth last year was 3.9%, all with visitors creating positive narratives about the city that are shared around the world.

The current nexus for tourism is Michigan Avenue and the Chicago River. We need to continue to support that nexus, while at the same time expand tourism in all directions. The lure for first-time visitors is downtown, but the gold for repeat visitors is in the neighborhoods.

We need to keep investing in this tourism engine but staying at the same level of funding won't keep us competitive as we are vying with every other city for each traveler.

### **b. What we need to implement immediately or within the next year**

- **An automatic annual budget increase to Choose Chicago dedicated to ARTS AND CULTURE:**  
It can be assumed that the city has budgeted all revenues forecasted from the prior year's tourism budget. However, if we automatically took the incremental increase in new tax revenues above the prior year and drove it into Arts and Culture, and if the State did the same, utilizing 2018 numbers, we would be able to push \$24M (\$12M from State and \$12M from City) into Arts and Culture, thereby fueling the ability to generate not only more tourists but also to help fund art and culture in every neighborhood. A Choose Chicago automatic budget increase dedicated to Arts and Culture could work in a similar fashion to what have been successful strategies in Toronto or Montreal. In these models, every cultural entity/artist/asset are granted an automatic level of funding, with an incentive to receive additional funding based on a determination of their impact on the tourism metrics for its area.
- **THE ARTS and CULTURE CALENDAR for the City:**

“If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” Art is made to be shared. If no one knows about an event, a performance, an opening, an exhibit... no one can engage. The city (DCASE) has a calendar, Choose Chicago has a calendar, every theater, gallery, club... has a calendar. But, is there one place you can go to really know what’s going on in Chicago? Remember the Reader, Time Out...they tried. Technology is the answer. But understand the need to do it right. As soon as you supply inaccurate information, you might as well close up shop because you’re no longer reliable. DCASE manually inputs and updates its calendar for those events it finds worthy. Choose Chicago provides a portal to its members to communicate their offerings, however it’s seldom used, rarely updated, and perceived to be cumbersome by members. The manual updating of calendars requires time and effort on the part of the artist, gallery, theater or organization, but does that small storefront theater’s marketing director who volunteers on Tuesdays between 3:00 and 4:30 every other week have time to do it? The democratization of Arts and Culture comes from giving access to all. We need a location-aware automated ARTS and CULTURE CALENDAR for the City.

- **Arts in the Dark:**

Commissioned research from the Boston Consulting Group on the most impactful tourism opportunities for the City; “light” tied for second place. The research showed that anytime we align lighting with something else the value of that something else was dramatically increased. A movement underway in Europe to crown “Mayors of the Night” creates major cultural and economic development opportunities to engage the Arts community when the sun goes down. Turning the night into day creates major opportunities not only during the tourist season but also extends the season and takes advantage of the early sunsets in the fall and winter months. Toward this end the Lighting Framework Plan for Chicago, a competition that engaged 110 firms from around the world to look at how to light the City... not like Paris or Shanghai, but to create concepts that were authentic to Chicago. The privately funded \$12M Art on The Mart installation on the back wall of the Merchandise Mart is one of the outcomes of that work.

**b. What we can plan for longer-term implementation.**

- **Subsidized Creative Industries Districts - Artists live, work, and play zones:**

Artists live on the cutting edge in the development of their work but also often push the boundaries of real estate. Take Soho, Tribeca and Dumbo in New York. Artists are attracted to an area by affordable live, work, and play space. The proliferation of art, artists and culture in Berlin is not accidental; it’s government supported. Identifying areas of organic cultural development and supporting their growth by modifications in zoning and codes that encourage artists’ endeavors and development not only supports the artist, arts, and culture but become the beacons that allow the residents and tourists to engage.

- **Placemaking -- A Cultural Hub for the community is an invitation for tourists:**

Authentic community gathering locations for food, celebrations, or engagement add value to any neighborhood. Parks that are unique and reflective of the neighborhood become a sense of pride and wellbeing for the community. Parks are examples where the language of play is universal. A visitor to the Chicago Botanic Garden or the Morton Arboretum might find English as the second language. When cultural hubs are utilized and celebrated by the community, they become beacons that beckon the tourist for that authentic experience where they find a deeper, more rewarding narrative than following the path well-traveled. These community cultural assets not only enrich the

lives of Chicagoans but draw visitors and economic development to the area, spreading tourism in all directions and lead to longer visitor stays in the city.

- **Some people are building walls – we need to tear ours down:**

A cultural and economic barrier that walls off the South Side of the city from development and tourism is the Stevenson Expressway. If and when major renovations happen at McCormick Place or The Sports Authority restructures its financing might be the right time to consider planking over the Stevenson at or about Michigan Ave and turning lemons into lemonade by creating a major park on top of this barrier. Similar transformations in Seattle and Dallas have been enthusiastically supported and incredibly rewarding to the community.





Name: Lauren Sivak

Transition Committee: Arts and Culture

Prompt: Ensure all Chicagoans can participate in and enjoy the arts, regardless of zip code or economic status.

There should be increased opportunities for Chicagoans to have access to the arts. I would like to sharpen my focus on the imperative need of diversifying the artistic workforce. In order for Chicagoans to have the same access to existing artistic opportunities and see themselves as having a career in the arts, we must eliminate unpaid internship and apprenticeship programs at major cultural institutions across Chicago. For the purpose of this memo, major institutions are those with operating budgets in surplus of \$5 million dollars.

Today, there are internship and apprenticeship programs available at many of our major cultural institutions. These programs open doors to career and graduate school opportunities that would otherwise seem impossible. We need to keep these opportunities. However, because many of these programs are offered without monetary compensation, the question of whether or not it's financially sustainable for a candidate to even apply becomes the primary issue, regardless of their qualifications.

An unpaid internship is inequitable and is an issue of accessibility, privilege, and inclusion. How can we ensure that all Chicagoans are able to participate in what are often considered essential career milestones if these are not paid opportunities? We continue to create a culture of "working for experience" that is unsustainable.

In the next 100 days, we need to conduct an artistic audit on those major cultural institutions that have existing internship and apprenticeship programs. We need to examine each institution's compensation philosophy and identify all barriers to financial compensation. If they are not investing capital in people, then how and where are investing? No major institution, regardless of merit or notoriety, should benefit from free labor.

As outlined in the "Advancing Arts and Culture in Chicago" position paper, we need to continue to leverage the philanthropic interests and assets available. We recognize the economic impact that arts organizations have on Chicago and within their local communities. As identified by the Chicago Community Trust, "These arts organizations in smaller communities support hyper local economies, respond to neighborhood needs, and champion a vision for their community's futures." We know that this impact is invaluable, but we need to take it several steps further. As stated above, we need to invest in people. In order to do this, we will need to encourage and convince funders and foundations to be builders of innovative



programming rather than buyers of existing programming. We need to encourage and convince these same funders and foundations to invest in those organizations outside of Chicago's wealthiest neighborhoods and beyond its biggest institutions.

In addition to establishing paid internship and apprenticeship opportunities at major institutions, we need to build more paid internship and apprenticeship opportunities across Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. By doing so, we get one step closer to ensuring that every Chicagoan has an opportunity for a robust career in the arts. The Joyce Foundation recognizes how imperative this issue is for Chicago, as outlined in their "Culture Priorities for Chicago's Next Mayor" statement: "The Foundation seeks to ensure equitable access to decision-making and economic mobility by supporting career opportunities and professional development for racially underrepresented arts leaders and workers in Chicago."

The biggest challenge, as it often is in the arts, is related to money, infrastructure, and investment. If there was a mandate that all internship and apprenticeship programs at major cultural institutions must have monetary compensation, there is a concern that many of these institutions would stop offering these opportunities. However, if Chicago aims to be a leader in the arts, and seeks to retain its artists, Chicago must continue to create as many paying opportunities as possible. This is for both the visible artists and those in the administrative offices. We must convince our donors, funders, and artistic leaders that paying people is just as important as the art that they witness and the art that they create, whether it be in galleries, on stages, or in halls across the city.

We must invest in people.

With gratitude,

Lauren Sivak  
Managing Director  
2nd Story

## Memorandum

TO: **Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot**

FROM: **Monica Haslip**

- Leverage cultural assets to foster economic growth and inclusion

**Create an Arts and Culture Plan that utilizes the city's untapped cultural assets which include a wealth of diverse stories that help us to identify our common humanity and position us to demonstrate and fully realize our status as a "World Class City".**

Chicago is a world class city with some of the best Arts and Cultural communities in the country. As a part of the change that we voted for, we are positioned to build a complex ecosystem that values and celebrates our diversity. Our greatest Arts and Culture assets in Chicago are our people. In this moment of reflection, we have the opportunity to demonstrate that we are stronger when everyone has access to the Arts. The new administration has an opportunity to heal and lift up the voices of those who have been historically overlooked and reestablish trust in a system of government that has devalued some of our most creative, innovative and resilient citizens. For many communities of color, we have not been given an opportunity to leverage our cultural assets to foster economic growth or build wealth.

Many organizations that have been founded by people of color have been recognized as world class Cultural Institutions, yet they struggle to sustain. These Institutions have demonstrated that honoring Culture and utilizing the extraordinary talents and gifts of residents can build viable businesses. We must create a plan that leverages the knowledge and wisdom of the community's anchor Institutions in order to build more facilities and provide high quality services. Naturally these Institutions should be owned and operated by residents of the community. We need an Arts and Culture plan that evaluates the impact of gentrification, appropriation, and parachuting upon existing cultural businesses in communities of color.

For years, many of the city's greatest assets have been disconnected and disengaged because they have been overlooked and underestimated. We need an Arts and Culture plan that takes into consideration the historic damage of deeply embedded conscious and unconscious bias. The segregation of the City has imposed a hierarchy of human value that has been perpetuated in almost every fundamental system that drives the city. The level of inequity that exists in these systems is a tremendous threat to our City maintaining its World Class status. We must establish a Culture of equity that honors and values our unique Artistic and Cultural complexity. The unusual voices that are often unheard, hold the key to our ability to experience our greatness. Many Arts and Culture plans have been written over the years but, none have focused on creating real systemic equity. I believe that creativity is God in motion. The motion is movement from bottom to top, making every voice and every piece of art matter. There are youth and young adults who are disenchanted with our current system of Government and don't see themselves and their voices represented. This extraordinary moment in history can reshape and inspire people to reengage and influence change from their seat of power. One of our basic human rights is

self-expression and the opportunity to practice should be available from pre-school through post-secondary. There is no benefit to leaving any citizen in our city behind. The gift of this moment is the e, open doors that have been historically closed and invite our most powerful underground creative influencers to stand in the light and lead. Art is a common language that touches the hearts and minds of all people. We should be known as the City that lifts up the voices and stories of all of our citizens because that's how we will identify our common values.

Creating a pathway to success in the Arts and Culture Industry for all citizens of Chicago should be our ultimate goal. There are creative industry entrepreneurs in the City of Chicago that are celebrated around the world and ignored at home. We have youth who have dropped out of school and are using their creative gifts and innovative minds to provide for their families in spite of their barriers. There are untapped resources in communities of color who quietly inspire and mentor youth with no assistance from the City. In the areas of education, housing, employment and economic development, people of color are not provided access to training and resources that prepare them for gainful employment in the Industry. The Arts Sector in the United States contributed \$763.6 Billion to the US Economy. The need is great for more facilities that offer high quality training and services that are owned and operated by people of color.

Although the Arts and Culture community in Chicago is filled with complex challenges, there are still more reasons to maintain a sense of hope and possibility. A plan that reengages our underserved citizens is a viable strategy for unifying the Arts and Culture community. Honoring our diverse stories and reigniting our collective creative power is our most promising path to transformation.

## MEMO

**TO:** Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot  
**FROM:** Executive Director J. Omar Magana, OPEN Center for the Arts  
**DATE:** April 15, 2019  
**PROMPT:** Ensure all Chicagoans can participate in and enjoy the arts, regardless of their zip code or economic status

We believe a potential initiative would be to create a plan to leverage city resources and change policies to build a more equitable arts ecosystem in all neighborhoods by (removing systematic racism and) actively seeking out and engaging partners outside the usual partners.

By building an environment where all artists and art organizations are seen as potential partners and where they too can showcase their artistic voices in all the neighborhoods to create a unified Chicago the new administration has the ability to infuse values of equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation in this initiative.

We also believe everyone will benefit from the City fully understand ALL the arts projects and programming taking place TODAY without any City resources or support so that it can step in where appropriate and provide continuous support.

Additionally, we would like to see the City Implement an Arts Support team within the next 100 days to assist artists and art organizations in the process of partnering with the city to assure the administration's new process is simplified, starting from applications to communicating with all city departments, to finalizing the artwork in a timely manner.





Our hope is to see the City implement a long-term practice which support conversations with neighborhood students, residents, leaders, businesses and organizations to hear what the Arts mean to them and provide a space for their artistic voice. We cannot expect that for residents who are focused on the day to day, that they have time to think about Art and how it might enrich their lives.

We would also like to note resources are always a challenge but resources aren't always money. Support can come in the form of a connection, a grant opportunity, a letter of support or in highlighting what is already taking place. The cultural heart of the City lays in its rich and vibrant communities, which feed into downtown, the heart that pumps out the cultural life blood of the City. If the communities are not taken care of, we will see an Arts ecosystem in decline. There might also be a challenge in every community wanting attention right away, which is why it is important for the new administration to assess what is happening and tier projects based on their shovel readiness if you will. Those ready to go should be first in the queue followed by those needing more technical support. This would also help tier the supports needed.

All is Possible



The Initiative: To promote collaboration between the City of Chicago and its musical community to bring the talents of our musical institutions and local musicians to the residents of the city through performances in concert halls, churches, schools and parks in all the city's neighborhoods.

Chicago is home to musical institutions that are recognized as the finest in the country. The Grant Park Music Festival, in its 85<sup>th</sup> season at Millennium Park, is the only orchestra in the United States to offer free summer concerts. These concerts attract audiences from across the country. The orchestra also hosts Classical Campers with the Chicago Park District, bringing classical music to neighborhood children. In conjunction with the Chicago Sinfonietta, the two organizations work together in Project Inclusion to provide professional development opportunities for promising young musicians. We need to continue these programs and promote increased development into the future.

The Chicago Park District has beautiful parks in all the neighborhoods of the city. For many years, the Chicago Federation of Musicians in partnership with the Cultural Center of Chicago brought musical performances to these parks. These concerts featured neighborhood bands and ensembles and brought families out to enjoy music of all styles. Suspended for lack of funding, through new sources of revenue, the Chicago Federation of Musicians would like to reinstate these popular City of Chicago summer events.

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events has a long tradition of presenting live music at the Chicago Gospel Music Festival, the Chicago Blues Festival, Taste of Chicago, Lollapalooza, Chicago Jazz Festival and the World Music Festival. Showcasing more of our Chicago musicians at these events would inspire young, talented local musicians to pursue an interest in music performance.

Chicago Public Schools need a strong music education program. All students should have exposure to general music education classes, be able to hear performances of local visiting ensembles and the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. Early



music exposure and instruction have benefits in the development of perceptual skills, language and literary skills, and spatial reasoning which enhances math skills and fine motor coordination. Making music with others gives children a wonderful feeling of belonging to the group. It promotes creative thinking, problem-solving, risk-taking, teamwork and communications. A long-range plan could be to implement a program with the Chicago Federation of Musicians that brings music into the CPS through our Music in the Schools programs and work together with the music instructors to bring private instructors to the schools to encourage the budding students to be the best they can be.

Not to neglect our senior community, the City of Chicago needs to bring music to the senior population. For those that are in senior living centers and cannot get out of their residence, we need to bring ensembles to senior housing and activity centers. The health benefits that music has on the elderly are astounding. Exercising to music helps with balance which reduces the risk of falls. Listening to music increases self-esteem, increases communication in dementia and Alzheimer' patients and reduces tension and anxiety. It also gives seniors a better night sleep, diminished pain, and an increase in awareness and quality of life. A partnership with the Chicago Department of Aging to bring music to the elderly would be a long-term goal.

All of these ideas require funding. This is the biggest challenge facing the new administration. I would hope that we might find partners to help support many of these ideas.



NAME: Willa J. Taylor

TRANSITION COMMITTEE: Arts and Culture

PROMPT: How do we leverage city resources and policies to build a more equitable arts ecosystem that is a synergy between culture and civic practice/community revitalization?

Chicago is a city rich in culture, teeming with cultural treasures and populated with a vibrant artistic and creative people. How can these civic assets be used to not only revitalize communities traditionally overlooked for economic investments; develop equity of access to this cultural richness throughout the city's neighborhoods; and build an infrastructure that encourages and supports artists working and living in communities across the city. Arts and culture can be woven into the fabric of how we live daily.

In the first 100 days....

- Modify NeighborhoodLIFT project to include artists as an occupation that receives maximum dollars for down payments on homes. Prioritize communities that have less access to arts.  
Challenges: May require City Council approval
- Prioritize artist/creative redevelopment proposals for Negotiated Sale of Redevelopment Project Area Properties  
Challenges: May require City Council approval
- Set aside units in new co-located library-housing developments for artists who will use the library enhanced community spaces for performance, workshops and exhibitions  
Challenges: Decrease in number of available housing units for public  
Will require management of "artists housing" to ensure turnover

For the longer term...

- Develop Artist Relocation Program (modeled on Paducah, KY project) that allows artists to buy foreclosed/abandoned homes for live/work spaces. Through public-private partnership with banks, offer 100% financing of basic loan package to artists to rehab/build city-owned properties in the cities' communities of need. Also provides subsidies for architectural services or other professional fees.  
Challenge: Additional initial infrastructure investments such as street lights, repairing streets and sidewalks, increased safety patrols and garbage pick-up

- Develop creative incubator communities in shuttered school buildings and churches within settlement-like community models. Include not just performing and visual arts but crafts and culinary arts. Auditoriums become performance venues for community organizations and artists-in-residence.

Challenge: Costs of rehab-upgrades and maintenance could be offset by small percentage tax of all large commercial real estate developments.

- Expand co-located CHA housing-library project to additional communities and include dedicated performance space in each development plan.

Challenge: May require modifications to Public Performance

## **MEMO**

**April 17, 2019**

**TO:** Mayor-Elect Lori Lightfoot

**FROM:**

Christopher Audain, Program Officer – Arts, Alphawood Foundation;

Tracie Hall, Program Director – Culture, Joyce Foundation;

Claire Rice, Executive Director, Arts Alliance Illinois

**INITIATIVE: Develop a Cultural Bill of Rights to increase public will for arts policy that supports the Creative Life of Chicago**

Our goals as a body is to transform Chicago by becoming the first city in the nation to adopt a Cultural Bill of Rights that supports equity and access to arts, culture, and creativity for all residents. Public funding sources for arts, culture, and creativity have historically been foundational to personal expression, equity, community vitality, and social advancement. These sources are consistently declining at the local, state, and federal levels, and this disinvestment in the arts both follows and contributes to additional systemic inequity.

The Cultural Bill of Rights is a strategy to change this paradigm and create a framework for arts funding and resource investment that is proactive, coordinated, and accountable. With our cultural rights clearly defined, every resident and neighborhood in the city will have a tool by which to advocate for access to the arts, and more fundamentally, for the right to a creative life. The creation of a Cultural Bill of Rights recognizes the role that the arts play in our communities, and helps to build a federated body of cultural stewards who are connected, ready and resourced to act and advocate on issues related to cultural policy and funding.

The Cultural Bill of Rights will articulate the inherent value of the arts for the people of Chicago, challenge the status quo of inequity across neighborhoods, and demonstrate why it is vital that every person in our city have the right to a creative life. It is the framework for building the public will to implement arts policy which in turn will lead to a safer and more connected city with stronger communities and neighborhoods. When we invest in our collective creative life, we invest in our shared humanity and our future. Arts and culture provide creative means to address the many challenges facing our city in a wide variety of civic arenas, including health, education, violence prevention, and economic and community development.

Currently, an ad hoc committee of cultural administrators, artists, and funders are developing a Cultural Bill of Rights that resonates with a broad array of stakeholders. Within the first 100 days of the Lightfoot administration, this group will gather public feedback on the role of creative life in community, use that information to draft the Cultural Bill of Rights, and develop a plan for dissemination, including a broader public campaign for supporting a creative life in Chicago based on the tenets of the Cultural Bill of Rights.

In the longer term/within the next year, the goal is to implement this “building public will” campaign, which will provide support and a unifying canopy for a wide variety of cultural policy initiatives, including your proposed idea of a line item in the budget for individual artists and community-based arts organizations in divested neighborhoods on the south and west sides of the city.

Those who don’t fully grasp the breadth of the value of a creative life across the city are both a potential challenge to the success of this initiative as well as the target audience for this work. With the Cultural Bill of Rights initiative and connected public engagement and messaging, we can move beyond merely preaching to the proverbial “choir” as we work towards building cultural policy that will be truly transformative for Chicago.